

Application No. 10/717,959
Response dated: May 22, 2006
Reply to Final Office Action dated: March 20, 2006

REMARKS

In response to the Final Office Action dated March 20, 2006, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration based on the above claim amendments and the following remarks. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-18 are pending in the present Application. Claims 1, 3, 12 and 16 are amended and Claims 8, 9, 17 and 18 are cancelled without prejudice, leaving Claims 1-7 and 10-16 for consideration upon entry of the present amendments and following remarks.

Support for the claim amendments can at least be found in the specification, the figures, and the claims as originally filed.

No new matter has been introduced by these amendments. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the present Office Action, Claims 8, 9 and 18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Hereinabove, Applicant amends independent Claims 1, 12 and 16 to place the claims in condition for allowance.

Particularly, Claims 1 and 12 are rewritten in independent form by encompassing all of the limitations of Claims 8 and 9. Accordingly, Claims 1 and 12, as amended, are novel and non-obvious over the cited references and are thus allowable. Claims 8 and 9 are hereinabove cancelled. Claim 3 is amended to provide proper antecedent basis based on the amendment to Claim 1. Dependent Claims 2-7, 10, 11 and 13-15 variously depend from allowable Claims 1 and 12 and are thus correspondingly allowable. Reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1-7 and 10-15 are respectfully requested.

Claim 16 is rewritten in independent form by encompassing all of the limitations of Claims 17 and 18. Accordingly, Claim 16, as amended, is novel and non-obvious over the cited references and is thus allowable. Claims 17 and 18 are hereinabove cancelled. Reconsideration and allowance of Claim 16 are respectfully requested.

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Claim Rejections – 35 USC §102 and 35 USC §103

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Bohn (U.S. Patent No. 6,429,422).

Claims 2-7 and 10-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bohn in view of Oliver et al (U.S. Patent No. 6,455,840). Applicants respectfully traverse. Claims 17 is hereinabove cancelled and rejections are rendered moot for this claim.

As discussed above, Claims 1-7 and 10-16 are allowable over prior art. Reconsideration, withdrawal of the relevant claim rejections and allowance of Claims 1-7 and 10-16 are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

All of the outstanding rejections are herein overcome. Claims 1-7 and 10-16 satisfy all provisions of 35 U.S.C. §§102, 103, and 112 and are thus allowable to Applicant. Withdrawal of all rejections and prompt issuance of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

No new matter is added by way of the present Amendment and Remarks as support is found throughout the originally filed specification, claims, and drawings.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's attorney at the below-listed phone number regarding this Response or otherwise concerning the present application.

If there are any charges due with respect to this Amendment or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130 maintained by Applicant's attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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